

Dear Members of the Public Health Committee:

I am writing in favor of HB 5558.

As a parent of a 20 year-old son who is on the autism spectrum, I understand the difficulties individuals and their families face trying to get the services the individual needs.

Our family is fortunate that my son has an IQ under 70 so he qualifies for DDS services. He will not require a Medicaid waiver once he turns

21 to access the adult day programs and recreational opportunities available for those with autism and other developmental disabilities.

He also benefited from a high quality educational program run by CREC.

Early on that program worked with our family to get my son's aggression and self-injurious behavior under control.

Unfortunately, there are many children and adults with autism who will not qualify for DDS services, but will require assistance to acquire and maintain a job. HB 5558 will make those services available to all individuals on the spectrum who require them.

I also am familiar with families who have not been able to get their child's aggression and self-injurious behavior under control. Families have called 211 for help. The children were hospitalized until they were stable and then returned home. However, when they returned home, the supports of a BCBA and well-trained staff were not provided and both the individual and his parents were at risk of harm. Parents have looked for residential settings that provide the intensive clinical staff their child needs to be told either it doesn't exist or the few in the state that do exist are full. HB 5558 will create a pilot program to help up to 24 of these individuals attain the supports they need. Individuals with high clinical needs deserve to receive the required services.

Please vote in favor of HB 5558

Sincerely,

Beth Lambert

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